## **The Great Game**

Arvind Gupta, 56 Visiting Scientist, Children's Centre, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy & Astrophysics, Pune

Pix: Mandar Deodhar



## **Education**

B.Tech from IIT Kanpur.

## Usually to be found

Creating new educational toys as also digitising and translating books for his online library, which has 2,000 books on science.

## Most recent work

Science Skills and Thrills, 2008, that takes science out of the classroom into life.

Call him a teacher and he shrugs. Say he's a toymaker and he's happy. The science enthusiast wants to eliminate the passive-observant methods of teaching science. To make students 'understand' rather than 'learn', he employs an unconventional method of teaching science through toy-making, using material that most people would treat as junk.

So, a straw is made into a multi-tone flute to teach the students about air pressure, a dried sketch-pen is transformed into a musical oboe, while an empty camera film can and a torn balloon are used to demonstrate the working of the diaphragm. His aim is to ensure that science no longer remains a feared, 'high-scorers' subject that can be only explained in a formal laboratory environment.

Having worked with over 2,000 schools in about 20 countries, Gupta has set up a unique children's centre at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics in Pune, where he holds workshops for students from 100 schools across the city.

by Pankti Mehta (India Today, Special Issue – The Game Changers July 27, 2009)